



# Yorktown e-Legion

Yorktown American Legion Post #1009

Issue #83

January 2026 to May 2026

## Apologies...Again!

My apologies again for the long lapse between issues of our long-running e-Newsletter. Our Post has a busy schedule and it has become harder to sit and put an issue together lately. This issue will recap some of the things your Post #1009 Legionnaires, Sons Squadron and Auxiliary Unit have been involved with over the winter months.

## Post Cleanup Thanks

Many thanks to the team of helpers who came down to the Post back in late October to put the Post to bed for the upcoming winter months - Steve Rice, Vincent Pipolo, Carl DiLiberto, Bob Garafalo, Craig Armstrong, Linda DeFeo-Cascioli, and Pat McDonough. Many hands make for light work and in a little over an hour they accomplished the following - leaf blew the gutters clear, put away the patio tables, umbrellas, and stands, cleared the old rotting pallets from behind our shed, and gave our grounds a nice leaf blowing to look good for the winter. Special mention here to Vinny, Steve and Bob who cleaned and set up the Hall for a baby shower rental before helping with the outside work!

## Post Holiday Party

On Sunday, December 14, 2025, our Post Family came together for our annual Post Holiday Party. We had 48 people attend and thanks to the wonderful efforts of Son's members Ed Lachterman and Paul Martin, a great spread of food was donated for our veterans to enjoy by Shoprite Supermarket in Cortlandt Manor. We extend a great 'Thanks' for the cooking for this feast done by our Sons members Ed Lachterman, Matt Essell, Jay Gussak, and James Byrne.

Our Post Auxiliary members arrived early to decorate the Hall into a Holiday Wonderland that everyone commented on (Sorry, I never got the names of our professional decorators!) Our Auxiliary members collected a host of donated gifts and prizes for a raffle table and added a

smorgasbord of a dessert display for all to enjoy - this was a wonderful family event, for the low price of only \$10 a person! Every Post, Sons, and Auxiliary member should plan on attending this fun-filled reunion next December. Mark your calendars now!

## Oratorical Contest Champion...

Our "School Call" open house for high school students and their parents was held at our Post on October 13, 2025. We gave presentations explaining what the Boys State, Empire Girls State, and HS Oratorical Contest were all about. At the end of the day our Post had 2 boys for Boys State, one girl for Girls State, and 2 students for the Oratorical Contest. A Trifecta of young people we could help.

On December 20, 2025, our Yorktown Post again hosted the Westchester County Oratorical Contest in our Hall. There are 2 reasons for this... our Post Hall is large enough and in such beautiful condition to hold the contest, and more importantly 2 of the 3 people in the County Legion who have worked to learn how to run this contest are in our Post (John Witt and Patrick McDonough). Four students registered to take part in the contest, one from Dobbs Ferry and 3 from our Yorktown high schools. At the conclusion of the competition, Sheldon Joseph, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader from Walter Panas HS and his brother Raihan Joseph, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader from the same school had finished in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place respectively. They advanced to the 9<sup>th</sup> District Contest held at the Beacon Elks Lodge on 1/13. Due to the last-minute illness of the District Chairman, our Post Adjutant Pat McDonough was called on the morning of the contest and asked to run the competition in Beacon. Pat recruited Legionnaires as they walked into the contest to help him run the competition. At the end of the event - Yorktown Post #1009's Sheldon Joseph finished in 1<sup>st</sup> place and advanced to the Zone competition with a young lady from Rockland County who took 2<sup>nd</sup> place. They both went on to the Zone Competition competing against students from Manhattan and the Bronx on 2/14

where our Sheldon Joseph again won the competition. On March 7, 2026, Sheldon competed in the NYS Contest against 7 other student champions from across New York State and came in 3<sup>rd</sup> place collecting a \$2,500 scholarship. What an accomplishment for this young man and our Post's new Oratorical program!



## Legacy of John Witt

Our Post suffered a great loss in early December with the passing of Legionnaire John Witt. He was our Post's Education Chair and while he may no longer be with us today his legacy is strongly felt. John worked tirelessly advertising and organizing our Boys State, Girls State, and HS Oratorical Contest for years. Less than half of Westchester County Posts take part in the Boys State program. Way fewer have Auxiliary Units to organize the Empire Girls State program. Before our Post had an Auxiliary Unit John organized this opportunity for local girls to attend. In the 3 years since the Oratorical Contest was revived in our County 10 students have taken part in it. 9 students were due to John's efforts. Thanks to John, one student became NYS Champion three years ago and another came in 3<sup>rd</sup> this year. We need someone to step up to continue John's efforts for high school students in our Post. Our Post Adjutant has the knowledge to help but no longer the time to give full attention to this great program. Let's keep John's legacy strong and help our community's youth.

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## Four Chaplains Ceremony & Post Everlasting Ceremony

On Sunday, February 1, 2026 our Yorktown Post conducted our annual Four Chaplains Ceremony to honor the 4 World War II US Army Chaplains who were onboard a WWII troopship crossing the freezing North Atlantic bound for the European Theatre. The crowded troopship was

torpedoed and sunk in the early morning hours of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1943. These four Army Chaplains, each of different faiths, calmed their shipmates and handed out life vests. When they ran out of vests they gave up their own, knowing full well what that meant. Survivors of the sinking told of the four Chaplains linked arm in arm praying with their shipmates as the ship slipped beneath the waves. It is a noble and moving story that all Americans should learn about and that is why our Post conducts this service.

Over 55 people attended our ceremony. Our Post was honored to once again have local clergy - Msgr Giandurco from St Patrick's Church, Rabbi Robert Weiner of Temple Beth Am, Pastor Dan O'Brien of Calvary Bible Church join our Post Chaplain Linda DeFeo-Cascioli and stand in for these four Chaplains.

Following the ceremony our Post conducted our annual Post Everlasting Ceremony to remember those Post Legionnaires that had passed during the past year. We open this ceremony up for anyone attending it to add a US veteran that passed that they wish to remember. We honored 6 Post Legionnaires - Antonino Fama, George Hansen, Edward Miraglia, Albino Paccioletti, Robert 'Bob' Raphael, and John Witt, and 5 additional veterans in this year's ceremony. Veterans Honoring Veterans... it's what we do.

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## Sons Squadron News

Our active Sons Squadron members were getting a little 'burned out' from running their famous monthly Fundraiser Breakfasts so they decided to try something different this year. They tried football nights at the Post with food and the Post bar open. They did it for a Jets game on 9/29 and again for a Giants game on 12/01. They had a nice turnout for both games and planned on having a football 'double header' for the NFC and AFC Championship games on 1/25, but had to cancel the event due to a 6" snow fall that day. Look for this type of event to possibly return next Fall.

In March, Chef Rob DelBalzo and the Squadron prepared their annual delicious St Patrick's Day Corned Beef and Cabbage Fundraiser 'Take Home' Dinner for over 100 people to enjoy at home. Our Sons are reorganizing their very popular Military Tribute Banners program which hung over 80 beautiful banners all around Yorktown last year.

If you are a Sons Squadron member please consider attending their meetings and events. This is an active friendly group who run all these successful programs but only 8 or so members do most of the work. They do a great job with

everything but would like to have more members help to keep it fun - and not be a grind! All Sons should try to attend the next meeting on Thursday May 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM where they will hold their elections for Squadron Officers for 2026-2027. Come show your support for Jay Gussak, Squadron Cmdr; Matt Essell, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Cmdr; James Calbo, Adjutant; Paul Martin, Chaplain; Craig Armstrong, Financial Officer; and Steve Rothenberg, Sgt-at-Arms.

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## Auxiliary Unit News

Our Auxiliary Unit members have been helping the Post at our events and have been getting their own programs up and running too. The Unit interviewed and chose to sponsor two high school girls to attend this summer's Empire Girls State program at SUNY Brockport. This is a week-long civics program where students learn about the way government works. It is a wonderful challenging program that educates young women about our country's government operations. Great job Unit #1009!

Another first for the Unit was organizing and running an 'Americanism Essay Contest' for students during March. They had a successful first try at it with submissions from grades 3 & 4 and grades 9 & 10 with one winner in each category advancing to the state-level contests. Another achievement was the Unit achieving 100% on their membership renewals for this year. Congrats Unit #1009!

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## Honoring Veterans

The American Legion, and our Post in particular, have as part of our mantra 'Veterans Honoring Veterans'. The public may forget about those who served in our country's armed forces - but to those who served, we make the extra effort. Many of our Post members see our emails and articles speaking about 'Rendering Honors Ceremonies', 'Honor Flag Ceremonies', or Commemorative Engraved Bricks but may not understand or be familiar with these Post programs. Here is a quick breakdown of these great programs so that you all can help us to honor our community's veterans.

Veterans Commemorative Bricks - there is a flagpole and plaza in front of our Post building. The plaza contains over 600 bricks engraved with the name, branch of service and the years or war they served during. Veterans or their families can have

a brick engraved and installed in the plaza at any time for the low cost of only \$100 (\$90, if a Post member). Every Memorial Day our Post conducts a dedication ceremony for the bricks added to the plaza during the past year. Our Post donates the proceeds of the sale of these bricks to local veteran charities. Buy a brick and help a veteran at the same time, basically. To date over \$33,000 has been raised and donated to charities from this program. Brick order forms are available on our website or in the Post's lobby.

Honor Flag Ceremony - a beautiful flagpole and plaza was constructed opposite our Post in Jack DeVito Veterans Memorial Track & Field. This is where our Post will fly a veteran's burial flag in a solemn ceremony. Our Post members gather and raise the flag with the family present. After flying the flag for three weeks with the veteran's name displayed upon the flagpole we return and salute as the flag is lowered and a bugler plays 'Taps'. Many families are looking to dispose of their deceased veteran's flags, and this is a beautiful way to honor their veteran and dispose of the flag.

Rendering Honors Ceremonies - everyone sees our emails asking for Post members to come to one of the two funeral homes in town. The funeral homes offer our ceremony to the families of veterans being reposed. We are notified that the family requests this ceremony for their veteran. Our members file into the room, 2 short prayers are recited, we turn and render a final hand salute from their fellow veterans. We file out. Families are visibly touched by this simple service. Veterans Honoring Veterans - it what we do.

Also please remember... many veterans don't explain the importance and location of their DD-214/Discharge to their families. No DD-214/Discharge and the funeral home is unable to secure military honors or a flag for your casket. In these situations, our Post ceremony is the only military honors for these veterans.

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## Welcome Aboard

We wish to extend a warm 'Welcome Aboard' to new Post members - Anthony Ambrogio, Anthony Casale, Frank George, Raymond Jusino, Roger Kiper, Eugene Lang, Fred LoBalbo, Grant Robitzsch, and Nicholas Timpone.

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## Thoughts and Prayers

Please keep the Legionnaires that we have recently lost and their families in your thoughts and

prayers - John Witt, Nicholas Timpone, and George Hansen.

## Sick Call

Please send happy thoughts to our Post members who are ill or recovering from illness - David Moscovitz, Al Laughlin, and Roger Thompson.

## Post Elections

During the month of May our Post will be holding our Election of Post Officers for the upcoming 2026-2027 business year. At the April Membership meeting Cmdr DiLiberto announced he was not running for his position again. Of course, we had to fight to keep order at the meeting as everyone stepped forward wanting the position as our Post Commander! Well, not exactly! The announcement was a surprise and no one present that night wished to step forward to be nominated for that position. At the close of nominations for Post Officers the following slate of Officers was set for our Post elections in May - Post Commander - no candidate; 1st Vice Cmdr - Vincent Pipolo; 2nd Vice Cmdr - Robbi Galbraith; 3rd Vice Cmdr - John McQuillan; Financial Officer - William Richey. The five Executive Committee Trustee positions have Rocco Salierno, Steve Rice, Patrick McDonough, Robert Boddie, and one position with no candidate running.

Our Constitution and By-Laws are designed to protect our Post in situations like this. Our present Post Commander is in office until our June meeting. All other positions are filled except for our Education Chair position, and the Post still runs with 8 Executive Committee members making the business decisions for the Post. Anyone interested in helping their Post and taking on the Post Commander position or the open Executive Committee Trustee position can contact the Post Adjutant with any questions. Once the newly elected/re-elected Officers are installed at our June Membership meeting - they have the authority to vote to approve a Post member filling any elected position in the Post for the remainder of that position's term of office. Our Post has a strong conscientious group leading it and we will work through this like everything else we do at the Post.

Our Post has had a couple of other personnel changes in recent weeks. Our long-time Post Financial Officer, Larry Armstrong, stepped down from the position after moving out of the area in late April. William Richey has stepped up to fill this important position and we are grateful for this. Our very busy Post Chaplain Linda Defeo-Cascioli also

stepped down in April. Linda has led our Post through close to 100 Rendering Honors and Post services. Best wishes to Larry and Linda on their future endeavours.

## Memorial Day Activities

Yes, it is now May and Memorial Day weekend is coming fast. Here are the activities we have planned. See if you can help at these events.

**Fri 5/22 3 PM 'Flags In' at Amawalk Cemetery**  
Our Post members install fresh US flags at veteran graves at Amawalk Cemetery

**Sat 5/23 9 AM to 1 PM Poppy Fundraiser**  
Our Legionnaires setup at Yorktown ACME, DeCiccos, and Uncle Guiseppe's Supermarkets to hand out red poppies and collect donations. Volunteers are needed! Help our Post fund its programs

**Sat 5/23 1 PM to 4 PM Poppy Fundraiser**  
Our Auxiliary Unit raises funds for its Programs at Yorktown ACME and Uncle Guiseppe's Supermarkets. Volunteers needed!

**Mon 5/25 11 AM Memorial Day Ceremonies at Town Hall's Veteran Memorials Circle**  
Memorial Day speeches before the parade.

**Mon 5/25 11:25 AM Memorial Day Parade**  
Join us for the parade from Town Hall to our Post Hall

**Mon 5/25 12:30 PM Veterans Commemorative Bricks Dedication at Post #1009**  
Join us as we dedicate those bricks installed since last Memorial Day

### **Post #1009 Upcoming Events**

Thu May 7 SAL #1009 meeting 7:30 PM  
Election of Officers

Thu May 14 Post Monthly meeting - 7:30 PM  
Election of Post Officers

Sun May 17 SAL Fundraiser Breakfast  
9 AM to 11 AM

### **Yorktown Post #1009**

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